

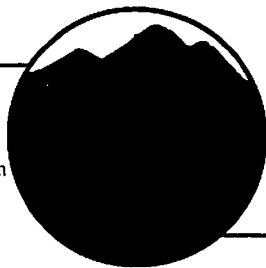
WATER

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RECEIVED

FEB 23 2009

Ravalli County Commissioners

RIGHTS, INC.

P.O. Box 9285 • Missoula, Montana 59807

February 20, 2009

Letter to the Editor
Ravalli Republic
232 West Main St.
Hamilton, MT 59840

Re: Public Notice Advertisement

Dear Editor,

I believe the commissioners made a grave mistake in granting the Bitterroot Star the public notice advertisement contract for the following reasons:

- The Bitterroot Star is a weekly newspaper, rather than daily, which causes delays in important public notices. Since the paper comes out weekly and is small, public notices must be received by the Bitterroot Star on the preceding Friday to appear in the Wednesday edition.
- Several unnamed state and county employees have complained about the delay in notification of projects, which in turn delays the permitting and beginning of construction of those projects.
- Since the owner of the Bitterroot Star, Michael Howell, is a reporter, editor, and often expresses bias in the reporting of his stories; many people will not read his paper. For example, Mr. Howell reported that people would have to fish underneath the home of a private homeowner who had built his house over a natural perennial flowing stream, which is subject to public stream access. That statement was incorrect, the home was built over an irrigation ditch that is not a side channel of the river, and it is 100% diverted water. This is not open to public access. This was presented from his own personal opinion and not fact.

Since I am a subscriber to both the Bitterroot Star and Ravalli Republic and a consultant that files many of these permits, I believe the county should seriously re-examine this decision and put the public notice advertisements back into the Ravalli Republic, an unbiased and daily newspaper.

Sincerely,

Lee Yelin
Senior Water Rights Specialist
Water Rights, Inc

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Cc: County Commissioners
Bitterroot Star